

Jan / Feb 2023

The specialist international magazine for theme parks and FECs

# InterPark



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**2023 -  
Celebrating  
a Century  
of Magic**



**Open to Question**  
**Jakob Wahl**  
**IAAPA**

**Feature**  
**IAAPA Orlando**  
**Show Report**

**Project Profile**  
**Pirate River Quest**  
**LegoLand Florida**



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## A new look for the new year!

Welcome to the first 2023 edition of InterPark!

As you begin to flick through this latest issue, you will notice the editorial pages look a bit different. With a new editor and editorial team introduced last year, we thought it was about time the magazine pages were freshened up too! Same great content, brand new look – so we hope you like it!

So, what can you expect from this issue? You'll notice from our front cover that we have got a great feature from Emma Davidson focused on Disney's 100-years history and celebrations taking place at its various parks; we take an in-depth look at Legoland Florida's new Pirate River Quest ride from David Whitworth; and I put IAAPA's President and new CEO Jakob Wahl in the hot seat for this issue's Open to Questions interview.

Elsewhere, our industry news pages this issue include the extremely sad announcement around the passing of industry legend, Alberto Zamperla who died suddenly in November at the age of 71.

Alberto was an indomitable visionary and innovator, revolutionising the amusement industry while bringing fun to billions of people of all ages worldwide, thanks to his endless creativity. An inductee of the IAAPA Hall of Fame, his passion for creating and innovating will live on through his family, colleagues, and employees around the world.

Beth Whitaker Editor

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**AMUSEMENT**  
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# Europe News

The latest news and announcements

## 1 ALBERTO ZAMPERLA DIES AGED 71

As the global amusements industry was celebrating the resurgence of IAAPA Expo Orlando in November, Zamperla Group sadly announced the death of **Alberto Zamperla**, the second-generation President of the global amusement manufacturer, and fourth-generation member of a family dedicated to amusement traditions.

Having died suddenly on 17 November, Alberto was an indomitable visionary and innovator, revolutionising the amusement industry while bringing fun to billions of people of all ages worldwide, thanks to his endless creativity.

In 1976, he left Italy for the US to further pursue his dreams of innovating and creating rides and attractions, following in his father's footsteps. His craftsmanship, determination, intelligence, and skills created hundreds of rides that transformed the amusement industry for generations to come.

His extraordinary drive and admiration for the industry led to much success, whereas in the late 80s, he signed a contract to build most Disneyland Paris attractions, followed by Universal, Paramount, and Six Flags, bringing his



innovations global. In 2010, Zamperla relaunched the most iconic amusement park, Luna Park in Coney Island, where for over a decade, he and his family transformed the famous amusement area into a seaside destination for travellers from across the globe.

As a result of his accomplishments and success, in 2019, he was welcomed into the IAAPA Hall of Fame, alongside his father Antonio Zamperla, and industry giants including Walt Disney and George Ferris, the inventor of the Ferris wheel. His passion for creating and innovating will live on through his family, colleagues, and employees around the world and he is survived by his wife Paola, his sons Antonio, Alessandro, and Adriano, and his three grandchildren.

"I like to fly in the clouds around our beautiful planet, for at least 100 days every year. I love living in New York City. I am proud to be an Italian Alpino. I am proud to be, above all, a citizen of the world. I enjoy knowing that my profession makes children of all ages happy across the globe."

- Alberto Zamperla, President of the Zamperla Group



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# Europe News

The latest news and announcements

## 2 EUROPA-PARK DEBUTS EATRENALIN RESTAURANT

The esteemed German theme park **Europa-Park** has given the world of gastronomy a modern-day twist with the opening of Eatrenalin.

The new restaurant opened on 4 November 2022 and features a novel gastronomic element of visitors dining on the move - literally, as you move through different rooms - and in the process are served various types of dishes. "New dimensions of dining" is how Europa-Park describes its new revolutionary eating experience.

Eatrenalin is the brainchild between the park and its sister company, Mack Rides. Visitors spend over an hour and a half in this futuristic dining experience, which is located at the four-star Hotel Krønassår. Eatrenalin successfully fuses together media technology, ride technology, cuisine and creative content.

Visitors to Eatrenalin will take in 11 different rooms through eight differently themed culinary areas: Lounge, Waterfall, Discovery, Ocean, Taste, Umami, a trip to the moon with Universe, and the final stop of dessert in Incarnation. The journey through space and time begins with an aperitif before heading to the lounge with a glass of champagne and small delicacies to welcome visitors. There is a choice of two eight-course menus: Red Dimensions and the vegetarian Green Dimensions. The menu includes the delights of tiger

milk in Discovery, seafood from Ocean, beef tenderloin in Universe and white chocolate from Incarnation.

"From the moment the experience begins, guests are immersed in a wide variety of worlds, not only through scents and tastes, but also through visuals, acoustics and haptics," enthuse the creators of Eatrenalin.

In the kitchen, well-known Spanish chef Pablo Montoro is tasked with overseeing this novel gastronomic experience. Having worked in what was rated the best restaurant in the world, El Bulli in Catalonia, his experience, and guidance will be acknowledged at Eatrenalin.

"In Eatrenalin, the focus is not on international cuisine or exotic locations, but rather on the respective taste experience," says Montoro. The restaurant spans 1600sqm with 200 guests seated at a sitting each evening.

"A spectacular sensory journey with new culinary dimensions. Float between extraordinary worlds and experience pleasure at the highest level," is how Europa-Park affirms what guests can expect from their visit. "Eatrenalin is nothing less than the most exciting gastronomy experience in the world, which engages all your senses and takes you on fantastic journeys."

Dining at the restaurant starts from €195 per person and Europa-Park confirmed that Eatrenalin is not for families as "it is a high-quality production, designed for an adult audience and without any kind of entertainment for children."

Eatrenalin states that "a comprehensive script has been developed," and the multisensory experience "has been developed with an international team of show producers, script writers and creatives, which is unique in the world of creating an exciting stage play."

InterPark spoke with key members of Europa-Park for further reaction to what is being called "the fifth dimension of eating."







### **What was the vision of Eatrenalin?**

“A restaurant of the future that appeals to all the senses and takes guests on fantastic journeys. The vision originated from Managing Partner Thomas Mack and Gastronomy Expert Oliver Altherr. As they flew over the European countries through Voletarium at Europa-Park, they came up with the idea of combining such a trip with unique cuisine that creates a complete experience, one that appeals to all the senses and arouses a wide range of emotions.”

Thomas Mack described the experience as, “a culinary journey for all the senses, bringing together the strengths of our family business. The innovative floating chair from Mack Rides, the virtual media from Mack animation and MackNeXT, as well as the gastronomic expertise of a kitchen team made up of top international chefs. There is nothing like it anywhere else in the world.”

Oliver Altherr added: “Our goal is to reinvent the culinary experience and to touch the guests at an emotional level. Each course is a culinary work of art that both surprises and amazes.”

### **Can you outline the practicalities of the travelling eating experience?**

“The floating chairs are a world-first transport system from Mack Rides and set the guests and food in motion. The state-of-the-art technology accompanies the guests throughout the experience as they travel to different exciting worlds in a way that delights the senses, seating the guests in different combinations either opposite or next to each other. The floating chairs are a patented new development and a world first from Mack Rides and can be experienced for the first time in Eatrenalin. Each floating chair consists of almost 2,100 components and weighs 320kg. Guests can also individually adjust the height and inclination of the chair.

### **How important is media and music for the Eatrenalin experience?**

“The virtual media comes from Mack animation, one of the leading studios for cinema animation films and high-quality media productions in Europe and worldwide. The think tank MackNeXT ensures that the various worlds of pleasure



become deceptively convincing realities. The guests dive into the depths of the ocean and fly into space without even having to get up from their floating chairs. This enables us to create a unique experience. The patented floating chair from Mack Rides ensures that guests are transported through the rooms, while the multimedia content from Mack animation and Mack Solutions creates truly convincing visual worlds. New LED screens and projections are used in an interplay of media technology and film. For example, from the moon guests always have the Earth in view - represented as a bluish glowing ball. Furthermore, the Berlin production studio T-Rex Classics has further developed original music for Eatrenalin, which audibly underscores the choreography of the culinary journey.”

### **How long did the project take to come to fruition?**

“The internationally successful ride manufacturer from Waldkirch needed 18 months for development - from mid-2019 to late 2021; 100 craftsmen worked on the project in parallel over a period of 11 months.”

### **How many guests can visit Eatrenalin?**

“Sixteen guests can come per group with a maximum of 12 groups. Eatrenalin allows for 192 guests in total. Its servings per events totals with 12 groups of 16 people with eight courses, equating to 1,536.”

Billed as “the world’s most exciting gastronomic experience,” there promises to be senses galore, courtesy of Eatrenalin.



# America News

The latest news and announcements

## 1 PREMIER RIDES ATTRACTIONS CONFIRMED FOR STEEL PIER

Atlantic City's **Steel Pier** will welcome two vibrant new attractions courtesy of ride manufacturer Premier Rides. Announced at the IAAPA Expo Orlando in November, the two rides will be constructed on the boardwalk promenade of Steel Pier, representing a marvel of modern-day engineering. The first ride built will be a spinning coaster and fans of Steel Pier will take that as a nod to the past and remember the amusement park's original spinning coaster, built in 1996. The new spinning Wild Mouse coaster is expected to be ready for the 2024 season.

The second coaster is known as the Skyrocket II, which will top out at 150ft (45.72-metres) and cover 863ft (263-metres). Skyrocket II will have one inversion shoot riders along to a top speed of 62mph (99.7km/h).

The coaster will feature cutting edge technology with digital signage draped on its structure. LED technology will see the ride colourfully illuminated for night-time delight. The Skyrocket II is due to debut a year after the Wild Mouse in 2025.

Steel Pier has a challenging build ahead, however Premier Rides has said it has every confidence the rides will push the boundaries of a modern-day coaster.



## 2 DISNEY AND AMAZON LAUNCH HEY DISNEY!

Disney and Amazon have united their creative worlds to create a customised voice assistant using Amazon Alexa technology. The application is called **Hey Disney!** and can be used on Amazon Echo devices. The voice assistant corresponds to commands from Alexa inside Disney resort hotel rooms at Walt Disney World and also at home.

Upon the announcement of Hey Disney! Walt Disney Media explained its new gadget allied to a well trodden path of strategic alliances: "The history of The Walt Disney Company is full of successful corporate collaborations, producing innovative experiences everywhere from World's Fairs to Tomorrowlands to the pavilions of EPCOT and beyond. Now Disney is creating its own custom voice assistant using Alexa technology for supported Echo devices. This digital voice assistant will work alongside Alexa to respond to vocal prompts, bringing Disney characters and stories to life in magical new ways to make guest stays more convenient, engaging, and enjoyable."

Hey Disney! started being fitted into Disney hotel rooms in late November 2022 to coincide with Walt Disney World's 50th anniversary celebrations. Guests can ask about the weather, make timers, alarms and ask times, as all Alexa-enabled products. The twist with Hey Disney! is that guests can ask guest services for more hotel amenities such as more room towels and park questions.

Popular Disney characters like Mickey Mouse, C-3PO Pixar as well as film characters from Marvel, Star Wars, and Muppets feature among more than 25 different voice options. Pre-set greetings and jokes from characters, answer trivia questions, and listen to fabled Disney quotes from films and series are all part of the Hey, Disney! experience.







FUN HOUSES



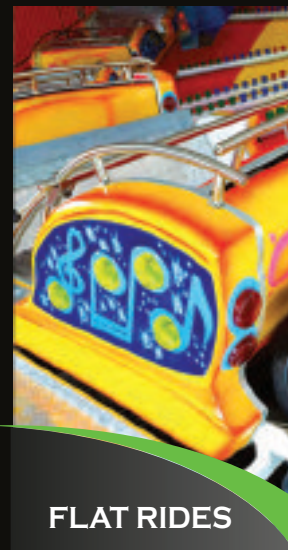
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# America News

The latest news and announcements

## 3 FASTEST LAUNCH COASTER IN CANADA SET FOR 2024

The Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) non-profit organisation, which operates the **Playland Amusement Park** in Vancouver, Canada, has announced the purchase of what it says will be “the fastest launch coaster in Canada.”

The coaster is scheduled to go into operation at Playland Park for the 2024 season. With a top speed of 72 km/h (45mph), riders will race over a 380-metre-long track, experiencing acceleration forces of up to 1.3G. The new coaster will have an investment of £5.8m and is being supplied by Italian manufacturer Zamperla.

For the launch coaster, the company is relying on LSM propulsion technology and its innovative “Lightning” train design, which was unveiled during the most recent IAAPA Expo in Orlando.

A train unit with three cars and a total capacity for 12 passengers per ride is to be used on the new roller coaster, the highest point of which will be 18-metres.

“This is an incredibly exciting day. Despite the financial effects of the global pandemic, the PNE has displayed its resiliency and innovation by not only surviving but by pivoting our business throughout it to emerge in a place to invest in this spectacular ride and into Playland’s future,” said PNE President and CEO, Shelley Frost. “We know that the new coaster will be an impressive addition to Playland’s ride roster, and we look forward to introducing it to our guests in 2024.”

Michael Coleman, Zamperla’s North American Sales Manager, added: “We are very excited to work with the Pacific National Exhibition on one of their largest



investments. Playland and Zamperla have a long partnership, and their team started discussions with us over a year ago about their long-term planning and helping them grow the park’s offerings.”

Adam Sandy, Roller Coaster Sales and Marketing Director at Zamperla, also commented: “The Lightning represents the next step of roller coaster design. We thought about every square centimetre of the Lightning, from the bottom of the wheels to the top of the seat.

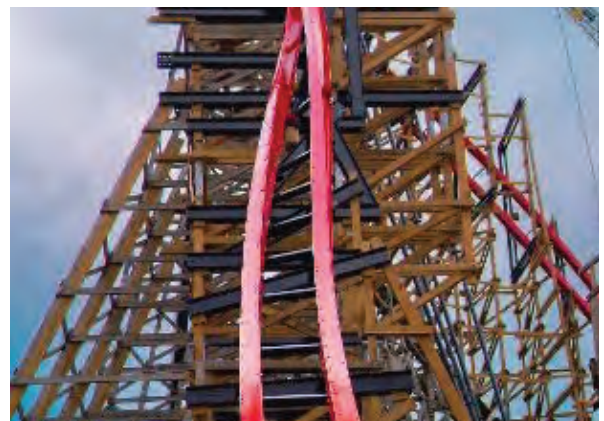
“The Zamperla engineering team kept our core design values at the forefront: safety, ergonomics, the total cost of ownership and pure fun for thrill seekers!”

## 4 WILDCAT’S REVENGE SET FOR HERSHEY PARK

Wildcat at Hersheypark is receiving a well-deserved makeover courtesy of Rocky Mountain Construction (RMC). **Hersheypark** has announced that Wildcat’s Revenge is to be an all-new hybrid coaster. The ride will open this year during the summer and the all-new wood and steel hybrid roller coaster will have a fresh lick of paint with a lush red track spanning 3,510ft (1070-metres).

The duration of the ride time will be just two-minutes, 36 seconds. Riders will climb a 140ft (43-metre) hill before descending into an 82° drop. Reaching speeds of up to 62mph (100km/h), guests will enjoy four inversions four times and journey on-board the world’s largest under flip serving three trains.

The original Wildcat opened on 26 May 1996 and was operational for 26 years before closing in July 2022.







## 5 HASBRO PARTNERS WITH GALAXYLAND FOR REBRAND

**Galaxyland**, which opened in 1985, has been given a rebrand thanks to a strategic alliance with multinational entertainment leader Hasbro. The partnership sees many of Galaxyland's attractions rebranded with Hasbro affiliation and, in turn, becomes Canada's first Hasbro-themed park. Galaxyland Powered by Hasbro serves up more than 27 rides, games and attractions spread over a 165,000sqft facility. The rebrand was first confirmed in 2020 but due to the pandemic has suffered several setbacks.

With those challenges now overcome, phase one of the rebrand has been completed with Galaxyland Powered by Hasbro enjoying its opening celebration on 17 December 2022, in time for the Christmas holidays.

A week-long festivity gave welcome to the revitalised park, with the main gate grand entrance transformed and featuring designs of Hasbro's iconic characters. The new entrance gate features several TV screens around a circular reception desk to add to its modern look.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held with a parade guided by Mr Potato Head and Monopoly's Rich Uncle Pennybags among other prominent characters.

Galaxyland Powered by Hasbro went all out to capture the attention of its visitors with daily prize giveaways on-site, mascot meet and greets and live entertainment as the park revealed its updated Hasbro-themed attractions.

Once fully completed, Galaxyland Powered by Hasbro will feature three and a half acres of rides, the second phase of its rebrand is scheduled to be finished later this year.

"We are thrilled for the opening celebration of Galaxyland Powered by Hasbro and to continue our Blueprint 2.0 strategy of offering more meaningful ways for families to engage with our brands," said Matt Proulx, vice president of location-based entertainment at Hasbro. "Parents, grandparents, and children of all ages recognise the iconic brands this amusement park showcases and our immense brand-building capabilities through unique and exciting real-life experiences."

More than a dozen rides have been transformed to some of Hasbro's most iconic brands, including the new vibrant Play-Doh Party Space Pad and the Monopoly Railroad Train, renamed from the Galaxyland Express and featuring a new entrance draped with Monopoly themed images and objects such as dice, money, cars and other pieces, bringing the board game decoration to life. The train travels through the park and tunnels, which are beautifully illuminated with neon Monopoly themed designs. Popular games including Mr Potato Head, Monopoly, and Operation are present too in line with the Hasbro rebrand.

One of the main additions to the park harks back to the iconic board game Sorry! which was originally released in 1934. Sorry! Slider Bumper Cars features a fleet of cars ready for guests to take for a spin on a new track fitted with themed lights.

Other themed attractions under the Hasbro brand umbrella to come on board in the future will include G.I. Joe, Nerf and Battleship Ouija.

"Galaxyland has been providing entertainment to locals and visitors from around the world for more than three decades, and we're thrilled to bring a number of exciting rides and activities themed to many of Hasbro's iconic brands," said Proulx.



# Asia News

The latest news and announcements

## 1 BATTLEGROUND WORLD AGENT SET FOR LOTTE WORLD

An innovative walkthrough attraction will open at Lotte World in Seoul, South Korea this year, thanks to a partnership between Canada-based Triotech and Legacy Entertainment, creators of **Lotte World** theme park.

At the time of print, Battlegrounds World Agent was scheduled to open in Spring 2023. The narrative of Battlegrounds is set in the universe of PUBG: Battlegrounds, Krafton's widely popular IP.

Triotech has designed a walkthrough experience consisting of three zones each containing, in their words, "a distinct attraction leveraging interactivity, immersion, media, motion, and projection mapping."

Guests will walk through a highly immersive setting that will accommodate a group of up to 16 people at a time. Triotech's in-house studio curated the project along with its respective engineering and R&D departments, which included design, story, show, theming, audio, as well as special effects. The attraction setting will take place in a vast area of more than 750m<sup>2</sup> (8100sqft).

Christian Martin, VP Communications & Alliances at Triotech, discussed the upcoming attraction in more detail.

### Can you outline the origin of the Battleground World Agent concept?

"Lotte World wanted a strong IP that resonates globally while being very popular in the region."

### How did the project come about?

"This is Lotte World's second project with Triotech. The team at Lotte World is extremely professional and the organisation is a global leader, certainly a reference in Asia for theme parks. The confidence established over the years of working together has helped build the trust that is crucial for completing large projects such as this one."

### How did you make sure the attraction was authentic yet faithful to the IP of PUBG: Battlegrounds?

"Working with a strong global IP is thrilling but of course comes with a lot of responsibilities. We must stay true to the brand in every aspect of the guest experience. We achieve this by deep study and sharing of ideas with all the stakeholders as we develop the attraction."

Mr Choi, CEO of Lotte World, added: "Lotte World is proud to present this new project for our park in Seoul. We believe visitors can create wonderful memories because this innovative and immersive experience with the universe of PUBG: Battlegrounds will be enjoyable to them."

Fans will relate perfectly with the PUBG universe. As guests immerse themselves at the start of the Battlegrounds game, players will board a C130 transport plane ready to take part in the battlegrounds game domain located on the island of Erangel. Triotech further set the scene:

"Things take a dramatic turn when debris from an explosion near an abandoned nuclear facility hits the plane and forces it to crash land at the Sosnovka Military Base. The game takes on new meaning as 16 survivors work as a squad against unfamiliar threats and merciless enemies who will stop at nothing to prevent the players from escaping."

The attraction represents another impressive success story for Lotte World to add to its allure of being South Korea's most prominent theme park. Both Lotte World and Triotech have worked closely together to bring Battlegrounds World Agent to fruition.

Image: Concept art by Triotech / Legacy Entertainment





A photograph of the Wildcat Looping Coaster at Fårup Sommerland, Denmark. The image shows a train of red and yellow cars with passengers, ascending a steep, curved track against a clear blue sky.

# FAMILY ADVENTURE

**WILDCAT LOOPING COASTER  
FÅRUP SOMMERLAND, DENMARK**



**NEW 2023 - FAMILY LAUNCH COASTER  
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V E K O M A



# China News

The latest news and announcements

## 1 SHANGHAI HAICHANG OCEAN PARK NAMED CHINA'S BEST THEME PARK

**Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park** has been named China's Best Theme Park by The Institute for Theme Park Studies in China.

The 73-acre marine life theme park was created by California-based entertainment design firm, Legacy Entertainment and approaches the fifth anniversary of its opening.

"We continue to be thrilled for the success for our friends and partners at Haichang," says Eric Carnagey, Legacy's Managing Director, as well as one of the firm's owners. "Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park, which is positioned as the chief competitor to the superlative Shanghai Disneyland, was realised for less than 15% of the former's investment. Given this, the park's many achievements and successes are all the more remarkable."

This latest award adds to the list of past awards earned by Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park, which include Best Theme Park by China's largest theme park organisation, CAAPA (Chinese Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions);

Outstanding Themed Land Park, Outstanding Family Entertainment Center, and Outstanding Social Media Famous Tourist Attraction at 2020's Golden Crown Awards; as well as 2021's Most Popular Attraction at The China Cultural Tourism Innovation and Development Forum. Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park was attracting over 3 million visitors per year until Covid 19 hit. In spite of this, the park has coped admirably with visitor numbers on the rise again due to the popular Ultraman-themed offerings, which launched in July 2022. The experiences, which include a large-scale museum, boutique, and restaurant, were also recognised with awards from The Institute for Theme Park Studies in China.

"The licensing and successful roll-out of Tsuburaya Productions' Ultraman intellectual property by Haichang is a huge milestone for the Chinese domestic theme park landscape," adds Carnagey.

"China, the world's second largest theme park market, has generally been slow to adopt international IP. Given the undeniable success of Haichang's Ultraman activations, we expect a fundamental shift to the landscape to play out over the next five years."

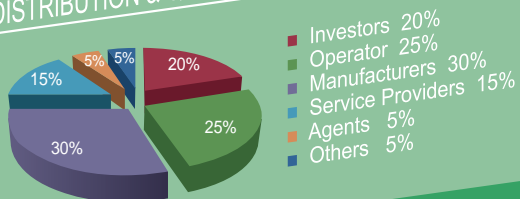


# 游樂界 ASIA ATTRACTIONS



INDUSTRY NEWS · PROJECT REPORTS · INSIGHT

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# Middle East News

The latest news and announcements

## 1 SAUDI ENTERTAINMENT VENTURES MAKES SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT

An important entertainment player is to make a significant investment across 14 cities in Saudi Arabia.

**Saudi Entertainment Ventures (Seven)**, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Public Investment Fund (PIF), will make a large investment to the tune of SAR50bn (£10.9bn). Seven will create 21 entertainment destinations to house 150 attractions. Its investment will create attractions such as an indoor hubless wheel, Wave House indoor surfing, a 10-lane bowling alley, indoor skydiving and an indoor karting racetrack. F&B outlets will feature prominently with restaurants, cafes, retail stores as well as gym facilities and a cinema.

The entertainment company is to forge strategic alliances with key international brands and prominent worldwide entertainment companies such as Warner Bros. Discovery, Mattel as well as Hasbro.

Construction has begun in earnest towards the first entertainment destination, located in Al Hamra district of Riyadh, which will cost SAR3bn (£700m) and span 90,000sqm.

Discussing the landmark announcement, Abdullah AlDawood, chairman, Seven, said: "Seven is redefining the future of entertainment in Saudi Arabia. We are partnering with leading entertainment brands and will continue to do so to develop entertainment destinations like no other.

"The ground-breaking of our first destination in Al Hamra district in Riyadh is a pivotal milestone and we are excited to bring unparalleled experiences to the people of and visitors to the Kingdom."



Seven Al Hamra aims to welcome six million visitors each year. Overseeing the evolution of this vast project will be Shapoorji Pallonji, which was successfully awarded the contract to fulfil the blueprint of Seven.

M D Saini, the MD and CEO of Shapoorji Pallonji, commented: "Saudi Arabia, through Vision 2030, has ambitions to become one of the best places to live and visit in the world.

"We at Shapoorji Pallonji feel honoured that Seven chose to partner with us on this ambitious and path-breaking venture.

"We are already executing multiple projects in Saudi Arabia and this project will certainly add significantly to our business portfolio and further establish our long-lasting legacy in Saudi Arabia."

## 2 NATIONAL AQUARIUM UNVEILS NEW CHILDREN'S ATTRACTION

**The National Aquarium** Abu Dhabi has unveiled a cutting-edge interactive children's area called Bella and Rio's playground. The aquarium's popular Hyacinth Macaws' is where the name derives, and Bella and Rio aim to bring joy to children through the wonders of creativity, discovery, and fun learning activities. Children will learn about animals, maritime facts, and the jungle forests in both an interactive and immersive environment.

One such activity sees children invited to choose their favourite animal to colour in before seeing their design displayed on a special collage of animals. The idea is that children will be instilled with the values of the importance of the environment from an early age and feel more engaged with the topic as they grow.

Bella and Rio's Playground is in the Flooded Forest and is free to enter; it accompanies another interactive attraction focused on a highly impressive volcano video mapping experience.

The National Aquarium is home to 46,000 animals which are spread across 11 zones. The Flooded Forest Zone which embraces Bella and Rio's Playground aims to emphasise the important role that rainforests play in the global ecosystem. Upon the playground being unveiled, Paul Hamilton, General Manager of the National Aquarium Abu Dhabi, spoke about the importance of their new attraction: "At The National Aquarium we are always looking to develop new and exciting



ways to educate young visitors on the everyday lives of our residents, and the Bella and Rio kids zone does just that with its fresh and engaging activities.

“The aquarium has always been envisioned as a wonderland for families to come and explore, enjoy, and engage their curiosity and we are even more certain that the launch of Bella and Rio’s playground will contribute to our success and growth as it serves as a hub of learning and laughter within The National Aquarium.”

### 3 MISSION FERRARI OPENS IN ABU DHABI

**Ferrari World** Abu Dhabi has welcomed a record-breaking roller coaster for 2023.

The latest attraction is called Mission Ferrari and is a landmark addition in many ways. The ride will feature backwards inverted loops as the park promise a 5D experience and will also hold the accolade of having the world’s first sideways coaster drop.

Mission Ferrari will be the world’s first SFX Coaster manufactured by Dynamic Attractions while Chinese ride manufacturer The Qiguang Group has fabricated the track. It will feature five launches with speeds up to 44.7mph (72km/h) with a track length of 1777ft (541.8-metres). The coaster has at least one inversion, which will excite fans of Ferrari and thrill seekers alike. The roller coaster is a semi dark ride as elements of the attraction are both inside and outside. The ride is fit with special elements from a drop track to tilting mechanisms. It will also be fitted with two 3D movie screens in the indoor section.

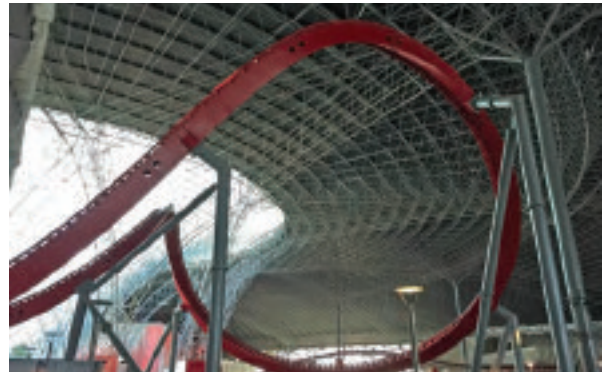
Ferrari World Abu Dhabi has invited the world to ride, “calling all agents” as per its glitzy video preview teasing the latest roller coaster to the theme park.

Pulses are racing as the park exclaims that, “your mission is to safely deliver a top-secret Ferrari spy car to a Ferrari Factory hidden deep in Maranello, Italy.”

The park encourages riders to “jump into a multisensory 5D rollercoaster experience set within a top-secret international spy headquarters, including high-speed launches, backward inverted loops, and the world’s first sideways coaster drop. Join the exhilarating Mission to Maranello, only at Ferrari World Abu Dhabi.”

Mission Ferrari opened on 12 January with a New Year’s resolution to bring joy, delight, and speed to intrepid thrill seekers. And loyal fans of Ferrari will be delighted to see the ride faithful to the heritage of the world’s most famous car brand.

There are six passenger cars in total that consist of riders spread four across the front and five along the back in two rows for a total of nine riders per car. The Formula One style cars run along a track coated with the distinctive red Ferrari livery. And the vehicles are anchored to a lush red track as the cars swing and gyrate as you travel along. The ride passes through a dark section before being launched out to glide



above existing attractions to give riders a great adrenaline rush. The decoration of the dark section is adorned with a picturesque mystical backdrop of beautiful mountains and a rock face where the ride enters and exits - creating a beautiful effect for the coaster to pass in and out of. Mission Ferrari enables riders to live a full-on, pedal to the metal experience, giving a glimpse into the top gear world of Formula One.

The Dynamic Attractions ride was first announced in 2014 but has suffered numerous delays, most due to the pandemic. However, track testing commenced in March 2021 and the record coaster has been vigorously put through its paces ready to open this year.



# Waterparks News

The latest news and announcements

## 1 VOLTAS SECURES AGREEMENT WITH SAUDI QIDDIYA WATER PARK

International Operations Business Group (IOBG) of Voltas has secured a lucrative mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) contract for the **Saudi Qiddiya Water Theme Park** worth £98.8m (SAR428).

As part of the contract for the PIF-backed Saudi Qiddiya entertainment project, Voltas will be responsible for the installation and supply of MEP works for the park.

Located in the capital Riyadh, Qiddiya will be the new entertainment hub in the Kingdom offering a tourist destination of highly immersive attractions. The project is expected to be completed by 1 October 2024.

It is one of Saudi Qiddiya's goals to establish Saudi Arabia as a global tourism destination and to support Vision 2030's objective of "elevating tourism as a major contributor to economic diversification and the creation of a world-class destination."

Upon the announcement, Pradeep Bakshi, managing director & CEO, Voltas said: "We are delighted to win yet another prestigious project in Saudi Arabia. We have been making our headway in the Middle East - predominantly the UAE, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for over 40 years.

"We have transformed adversities into opportunities through improvised processes, embraced automation, and eliminated significant costs arising out of mobility restrictions and other project risks.

"Today, Voltas is the leading MEP services provider in the region, felicitated with several awards for its quality, capability, and safety records. With this new project,



we believe that we will provide vast opportunities for development and collaboration in the coming years."

The Saud Qiddiya water park will cover 252,000m<sup>2</sup> of land and will be home to 22 rides and attractions. The park will incorporate advanced environmental systems to minimise the use of water through recycling and smart usage in line with QIC's sustainability practices. Some rides have been designed to use 75% less water than traditional rides found in other water parks.

Moreover, rainwater that falls on the site will be collected, treated, and reused to irrigate the destination. The Saudi Qiddiya Water theme park will use the water more economically in its slide attractions with riders gliding at the end of attraction into a shallow pool that uses less water.

## 2 SUPERNOVA WATER SLIDE OPENS AT FUNFIELDS

**Funfields** water park has confirmed its new Supanova water slide has opened, taking riders along a 250-metres course, and plunging from a nine-story height.

The ride is located on the 15.7-hectare theme park in Whittlesea, around an hour from the heart of Melbourne, Australia and comes with an investment of £4.5m, with construction taking 18 months.

The slide sends riders into a colourful tunnel at rising speeds before they bank into a 60-metre-wide funnel that delivers a feeling of zero-gravity.

"We wanted to give our guests the most exhilarating waterpark experience in the world," Funfields operations manager Stephen Philp said. "And what we received back doesn't disappoint. Taking a look at Supanova it's easy to understand why. Supanova gives the feeling of actual weightlessness with zero g-forces, which generates some serious fun for between two and four guests at a time.

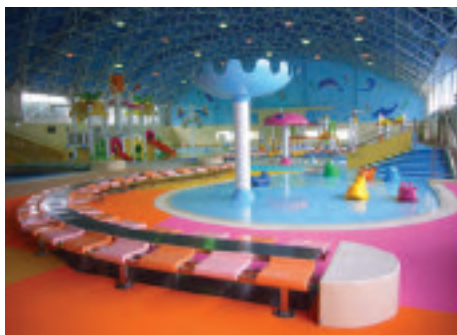
"The actual speed at which you travel depends on the total weight of the participants, but I can guarantee that it's fast."







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# Adventure Products

Adventure Products can be a valuable add-on to an operation.

Beth Whitaker spoke with some of the leading suppliers in the sector, to find out what's new and trending, while looking at the main challenges of operating such products.

Having been in business for more than 34 years, RCI Adventure Products, based in Michigan, USA, has built and installed 900+ attractions in 32 countries to date. Striving to revolutionise adventure products by constantly experimenting with new amusement attraction design concepts and technologies, the company manufactures ropes courses, mazes, climbing walls, and net play.

Speaking with InterPark about the appeal of rope courses specifically, RCI Vice President Mark Forbes says: "It's a family activity for all ages and as such, we target that sector with the message that RCI rope courses are a great way for people to spend their leisure time and that "family togetherness" is a good thing and an integral part of the experience. This trend of "family togetherness", along with wanting to be more active, seems to be more prevalent since Covid. The fact that we offer free roam, where people can choose their own path when they're on the course is also a great appeal."

While RCI's latest product Sky Trail Sky Tour is a great standalone attraction, you are most likely to

find the manufacturer's products as part of a bigger amusement experience, such as an additional feature at a theme park.

A vital factor to all adventure attraction operations is, of course, safety and RCI tells InterPark how it provides a complete service from initial design to install, inspection and then staff training. "We offer continued support with required training and inspections annually," said Forbes. "This safety aspect is key and typically, we run programs for operator training, operator trainer training, and inspector training to ensure best in safety standards.

"One of our key safety specialties for our harnessed ropes courses includes a continuous and passable overhead tracking system. This means you cannot remove your sling line from the overhead track at any time while in the ropes course; no unclipping or re-hooking required, and no help needed from staff to navigate through the course.

"Our R&D department is continuously producing new elements for our courses and tend to release new





ideas every year. Over and above this, gamification is currently under review where we would look to incorporate RFID technology with a reward program for the participant.

"Every attraction that we engineer is done so with patented integrated systems that increase the level of safety, reduce labour costs, and raise the number of participants for high capacities as well as increase the age range for guest participation. Guests never experience anything short of unforgettable or thrilling when they choose to elevate their fun and engage with our amusement attractions."

Speaking with Phil Pickersgill of Innovative Leisure in the UK – and a partner of RCI Adventure's – he also believes that free roam is one of the main trends within the sector and places such as Bear Grylls Adventure in the UK are performing well. "The free roaming aspect is crucial," he said. "Children rarely get the control over the equipment themselves and then there's the repeat play: they want to come back to choose a different path, element or level."

Echoing Forbes' view that rope courses can be fun for everyone in the family, Pickersgill said: "Many of our new openings in 2022 could be found at UK coastal resorts aimed at the family market. There hasn't been a specific age group targeted, but crucially the attractions were aimed at children from two-years-old on our junior low ropes model, upwards." In terms of product development in the UK,

Pickersgill explained that at Innovative Leisure the team continues to add many more interesting and challenging elements to its rope courses – such as the Spring Steps featured at Haven Haggerston in Northumberland. "We have also developed the zip aspect for junior or low ropes, which has proved a huge hit with customers and gets great feedback," he said. "We will have more major zip related developments later this year."

Similarly, in terms of safety, Innovative Leisure also provides a complete service from initial design to install, inspection and staff training. This complete package is quite unique in the UK according to Pickersgill, with the company having a specialist team based in Leicester.

As well as this, there is the annual program of third-party inspections, "which" he said, "are vital for adventure or off-ground activities like our high ropes courses." These annual inspections are done under the ADIPS, LEAPS or ERCA in the UK.

LEAPS is a new award-winning scheme launched in 2022 and managed by Jon Ruddock. It is the only leisure safety scheme to offer assurance to the public that the three main causes of accidents are managed within an operation - Competent Operator, Safe Asset, Competent Inspector. These are known as the three LEAPS stars and to be a LEAPS Certified Site, all three of these stars need to align. The scheme has been written with the principles of the System of





# Family Adventure

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Safety for Attractions as published by the Health and Safety Executive.

Also based in the UK is Airparx, a company that specialises in the supply and installation of FEC equipment, specifically inflatables, play, climbing and interactive solutions. Speaking with InterPark, Airparx's Commercial Director Rob Christie said: "Without doubt we continuously receive enquiries for new themed attractions based on TV shows and social media content. Gamification; receiving a score; time or team position; is also very much a constant in our new product development. Retro fit gamification has been very popular during 2022, with operators wanting to add gamification to existing attractions to enhance the experience, and if possible, create a new revenue stream.

"As the industry evolves and sites upgrade facilities, we are finding that all the experiences will appear in one-off FECs, as operators continue to enhance the customer experience and dwell time," Christie

continued. "With operators moving towards a one ticket entry pricing strategy, it's also important that all attractions complement each other from a time, supervision, and ROI perspective."

Walltopia, based in Bulgaria is one of the world's biggest manufacturers of climbing walls with more than 24 years of experience in the industry. At the same time, it has a large variety of entertainment attractions in its portfolio and has completed thousands of projects around the world.

Commenting on the appeal of ninja courses, Milena Boyadjyska from the company noted how television programmes have had a positive influence on the popularity of the attraction, telling InterPark:

"A lot of people get hooked on ninja courses because of shows like Ninja Warrior and as such, a lot of the obstacles we make are also based on the ones you see on the show.







"A couple of current trends are to use mechanical obstacle courses like WipeOut, and inflatable courses are very popular. In comparison to other attractions such as rope courses and fun walls, I would say ninja courses aren't as popular with operators because they require the participants to have good coordination, whereas the other attractions are more focused on the fun experience."

And in terms of technological advances being developed by the manufacturer, Walltopia told InterPark it has added timer options to its ninja courses recently, while also working on a product called Gamifier, which is a scoring system that allows people to keep track of their own performance, while also adding games to the different attractions and keeping things more interesting for guests.

Ninja courses do also come with safety challenges, such as fireproofing the obstacle materials and high



insurance costs depending on what the attractions involve, but Walltopia had no further comment on this area of the business.

So, there you have it... A brief overview of what the sector currently has to offer and what operators are wanting from their adventure products. While some of the attractions may have more challenges than others, I think it's safe to say that there's nothing stopping adventure attractions being just as exhilarating and enticing as your big, thrill-seeking roller coasters and amusement rides.

From an operations perspective, while the energy crisis continues for many around the globe, it might just be the time for these low-energy consuming add-ons to take centre-stage and become the star of the show.

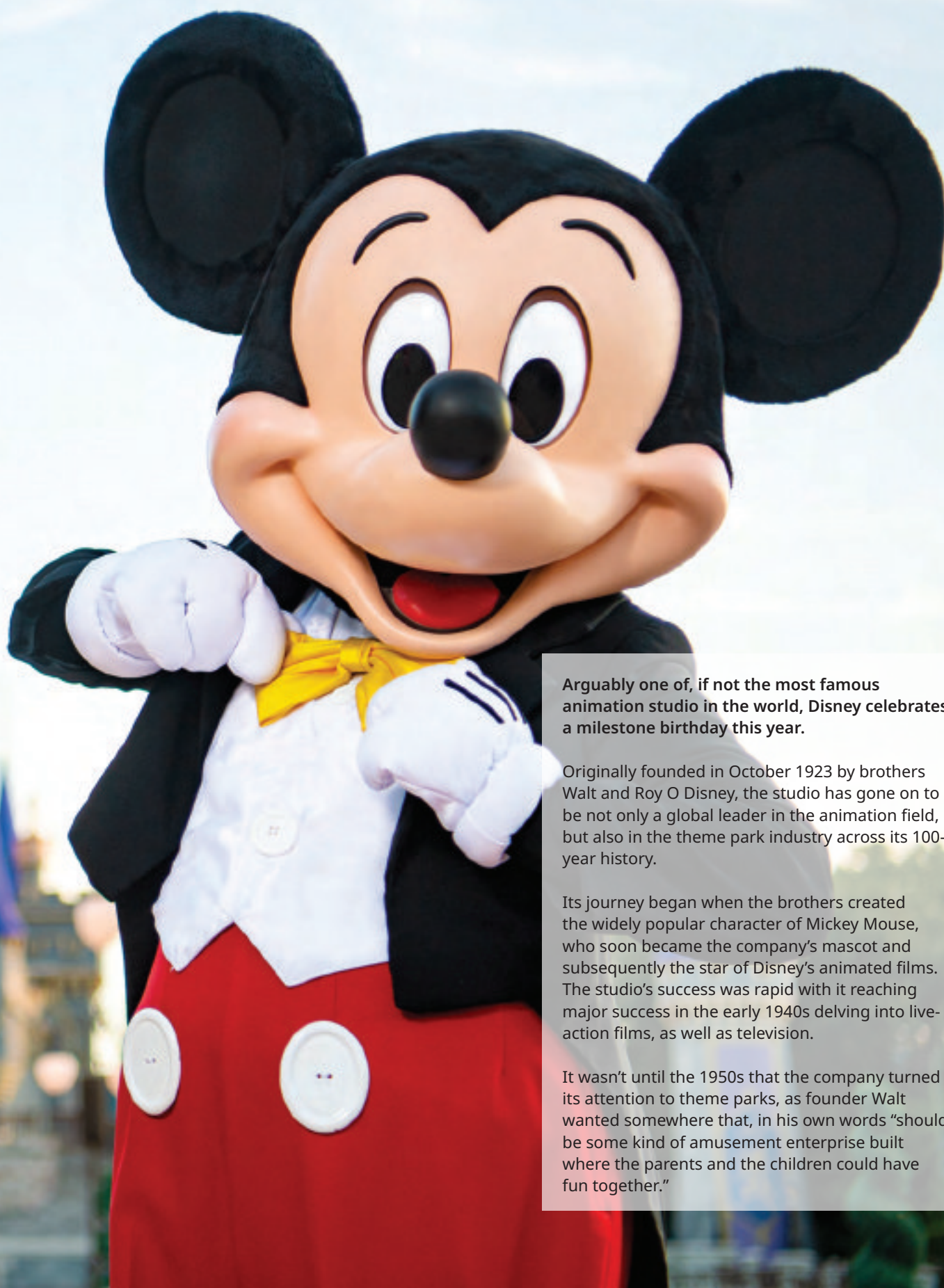




# **Disney – Creating Magic Moments for a 100 Years!**

By Emma Davidson





Arguably one of, if not the most famous animation studio in the world, Disney celebrates a milestone birthday this year.

Originally founded in October 1923 by brothers Walt and Roy O Disney, the studio has gone on to be not only a global leader in the animation field, but also in the theme park industry across its 100-year history.

Its journey began when the brothers created the widely popular character of Mickey Mouse, who soon became the company's mascot and subsequently the star of Disney's animated films. The studio's success was rapid with it reaching major success in the early 1940s delving into live-action films, as well as television.

It wasn't until the 1950s that the company turned its attention to theme parks, as founder Walt wanted somewhere that, in his own words "should be some kind of amusement enterprise built where the parents and the children could have fun together."





The name was changed several times before Walt stuck on the memorable 'Disneyland' for his first ever branch of the amusement park. Work began on Disneyland in 1954 on a plot of land in Anaheim - where it still sits now - with a view to be finished in the following year, with storytelling areas and family-friendly amusements.

The design of Disney theme parks has always been the same, to resemble small American towns of the early 20th century that lead guests down a path to the iconic main attraction of the Sleeping Beauty Castle, which was originally inspired by Germany's Neuschwanstein Castle and sits at the centre of Disneyland.

The four original alternative themed lands of the park consisted of Frontierland, themed to the American Frontier of the 19th century; Adventureland, resembling a wild tropical jungle; Fantasyland, based on Disney's animated fairy tale films; and Tomorrowland, depicting views of the future, especially that of the Space Age. By the time the park opened, it had cost the company \$17m to construct. It wasn't until 1971 that Disney opened its second large scale amusement park, Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida. Still considered to be the company's largest and most well-known amusement park, it was designed to supplement the original Disneyland in Anaheim.

What set it apart from Disneyland, was Walt's vision for more of a community-led attraction in Orlando, that formed a testbed for new city-living innovations, combining the real with the utopian idealism Disney proposed. Walt passed away during the build process, leaving his brother to make sure his dream was made a reality.

Work began on the park in 1967 and The Magic Kingdom was the first theme park to open in the complex, in 1971, followed by EPCOT (1982), Disney's Hollywood Studios (1989), and Disney's Animal Kingdom (1998). It was Walt's brother Roy who insisted the name of the entire complex be changed from Disney World to Walt Disney World, ensuring that people would remember that the project was Walt's dream.

Looking at each individual park in Walt Disney World closer, starting with Magic Kingdom, this park features classic attractions, enchanting fireworks, musical parades and Disney characters. Secondly, EPCOT has been designed to inspire curiosity, imagination and wonder through its international festivals, innovative attractions, and cultural experiences.

Home to four unified neighbourhoods – World Celebration, World Nature, World Discovery and World Showcase – EPCOT continues to evolve with

the biggest transformation in its history underway. As Walt Disney once said, EPCOT will “always be in a state of becoming,” and the park is set to enter its next 40 years with new ways for guests to experience the magic of possibility.

Disney’s Hollywood Studios debuted on 1 May 1989 and quickly immersed guests in the glamour of show business 365 days a year with thrilling attractions, Broadway-style shows and world-class entertainment. The 135-acre park is divided into seven themed lands of attractions based on films, which originated with Walt Disney at a time when studio backlot tours were limited to a privileged few. The fourth Walt Disney World theme park celebrates one amazing adventure after another with wild animals, exciting attractions, lavish stage shows and familiar characters. Highlights include a flight on a banshee, a runaway train adventure, a journey through a bioluminescent rainforest, an authentic African safari, a whirling white-water raft ride, a thrilling race back in time to prehistoric worlds, and two Broadway-style musical stage shows based on hit Disney films.

In 2018, it was reported that Walt Disney World was the most visited holiday resort in the world with an average attendance of 58 million people per year. The property covers nearly 25,000 acres comprising four theme parks, two water parks (Disney’s Blizzard Beach and Disney’s Typhoon Lagoon), 31 themed resort hotels, nine non-Disney hotels, several golf courses, a camping resort, and other entertainment venues, including the outdoor shopping centre Disney Springs.

It was Walt Disney World that set the benchmark for other parks to follow suit. As it stands, the Disney corporation currently owns six other theme parks across the globe in Paris, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Florida, Anaheim, and Tokyo.

Tokyo Disneyland was the very first park to be opened outside of the US, in 1983. The park was constructed by WED Enterprises in the same style as Magic Kingdom in Florida and Disneyland in California. It is owned by The Oriental Land Company, which licences property from The Walt Disney Company. Tokyo Disneyland and its companion park, Tokyo DisneySea, are the only Disney parks in the world not owned or operated by The Walt Disney Company in any capacity.

The park has seven themed areas: the World Bazaar; the four traditional Disney lands, Adventureland, Westernland, Fantasyland and Tomorrowland; and two mini-lands, Critter Country and Toontown. Many of these areas mirror those in the original Disneyland as they are based on American Disney films and fantasies. The park is noted for its extensive open spaces to accommodate the large crowds that visit. As of 2019, Tokyo Disneyland was the most visited theme park in Japan and the third-most visited



theme park in the world behind Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World and Disneyland Park at the Disneyland Resort.

In 1992, Disney magic headed to Europe with the opening of Euro Disney, a theme park that would grow to become today’s Disneyland Paris. The last 30 years have seen more than 250 million visitors step through the gates of Disneyland Park, which still offers guests the magic it started with in the early 90s.

It encompasses two theme parks, resort hotels, Disney Nature Resorts, a shopping, dining and entertainment complex, and a golf course. Disneyland Park is the original theme park of the complex, opening in 1992. A second theme park, Walt Disney Studios Park, opened in 2002. Disneyland Paris celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2017, by then 320 million people had visited, making it the most visited theme park in Europe.

Hong Kong Disneyland was next to open its doors in 2005, located on reclaimed land beside Penny’s Bay at the north-eastern tip of Lantau Island. Officially opened on 12 September, the resort contains the Hong Kong Disneyland theme park, the Hong Kong Disneyland Hotel, Disney’s Hollywood Hotel, Disney Explorers Lodge and several retail, dining and entertainment facilities covering 320 acres of the island.



Lastly, Disney's most recent theme park was built in Shanghai back in 2016. The park currently has seven themed areas: Mickey Avenue, Gardens of Imagination, Fantasyland, Treasure Cove, Adventure Isle, Tomorrowland, and Toy Story Land. It is co-owned and operated by Disney Parks, Experiences and Products and Shanghai Shendi Group, through a joint venture between The Walt Disney Company and Shendi.

It goes without saying that Disney's theme parks and attractions will undoubtedly be at the centre of the 100 anniversary celebrations this year, with each complex putting its own unique spin on the party. The main tribute will however take place at the original Disneyland resort in Anaheim with brand-new attractions, night-time spectacles and more. Firstly, a brand-new attraction 'Mickey's Toontown' will open at the park, with the first ride 'Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway' set to open as InterPark went to print. The family-friendly attraction is similar to what you'll find in Disney World's Hollywood Studios, and, on the ride, visitors jump aboard a train driven by Disney star Goofy to get transported to the world of Mickey Mouse.

One of the most significant changes to the Disneyland version of the attraction will be the queue - instead of highlighting different Mickey Mouse cartoons, it will be a tribute to the famous mouse with props and other memorabilia from his illustrious career.

The rest of Mickey's Toontown will reopen on 8 March 2023. The reimagined space will be a great area of the park, serving as a spot for families with younger children to play together. One major addition will be CentTOONial Park, where there will be two interactive play experiences, one of which is a water table for sensory experiences and the other is the dreaming tree where kids can crawl and explore.

Ending the night with a spellbinding fireworks display is something synonymous with Disneyland, and



guests can expect to be given just that as part of this year's 100 anniversary celebrations. Two new night-time spectacles will take place this year, one when Disney100 kicks off called 'Wondrous Journeys', which will feature nods to every Walt Disney Animation Studios film to date, and a heart-warming new song, "It's Wondrous."

No matter where visitors stand, they will be surrounded by projections and music, as well as fireworks on selected evenings. Just a stone's throw away at Disney California Adventure, 'World of Color—One' will highlight the storytelling legacy of Walt Disney. The show will tell an entirely new story that will show off Disney characters, with the show's concept art displaying characters like Mirabel from Encanto, Mufasa and Simba from The Lion King, and Miguel from Coco. With the new show comes a new original song, "Start a Wave."

Later in Spring, a huge parade will take to the streets of Main Street USA once again. 'Magic Happens' will see Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, and all their pals don new platinum-inspired costumes in a tribute to 100 years of Disney, and huge crowds are expected to turn out after the last parade was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With Disneyland's Sleeping Beauty Castle being central to the park's popularity, that too will receive a makeover for this year's anniversary. It will get brand-new shimmering decor, as well as platinum banners and bunting. On either side of the castle moat, there will be fountains, and at the very top of the centre spire, there will be a golden wishing star. Guests will also find the new platinum decor throughout the resort, including the Downtown Disney District and the three Disneyland hotels.

Aside from the new attractions, firework shows and merchandise at Disney land, Orlando's Disney World's EPCOT will also get a new fireworks show, whereas at Magic Kingdom, an enhanced version of the fan-





favourite Happily Ever After, will return. Plus, a long-awaited ride zooms in during spring 2023. The TRON Lightcycle Power Run coaster is set to open at Magic Kingdom Park.

Disney World is currently still celebrating its own 50th anniversary, which runs until March 31, 2023, but more updates on the Disney 100 Years of Wonder celebration at the Walt Disney World Resort are expected soon. Internationally, Hong Kong Disneyland will unveil a new statue of Walt Disney and Mickey Mouse.

Aside from the 100th anniversary, Disney has announced that its Splash Mountain attraction will permanently close at Walt Disney World Resort on January 23 to make way for 'Tiana's Bayou Adventure', a new attraction inspired by the story and characters from the film *The Princess and the Frog*. The ride will take guests on a musical adventure inspired by the beloved story and characters from the fan-favourite film. Picking up where the film left off, guests will join Princess Tiana, Naveen and jazz-loving alligator Louis on an adventure through the bayou as they prepare to host a one-of-a-kind Mardi Gras celebration where everyone is welcome. Along the way, guests will encounter familiar faces, make new friends and travel through the bayou to original music inspired by songs from the film as they are brought into the next chapter of Tiana's story. The log flume ride originally opened in Disneyland in July 1989 before versions also opened at Disney World and Tokyo Disneyland in October 1992. The original ride incorporated audio and animatronics from a then-defunct attraction, "America Sings." Tiana's Bayou Adventure will open in Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando and Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, California in 2024.

2022 also saw the return of Fantasmic! at Disney's Hollywood Studios at Walt Disney World Resort. The legendary night-time spectacular invited guests into Mickey's imagination for a larger-than-



life show painted on a grand canvas of dancing water overflowing with suspenseful surprises. The elaborate 29-minute night-time spectacular takes place nightly – a kaleidoscope of entertainment featuring thrilling stunts, dazzling special effects and a rousing score based on classic Disney animated films. Fantasmic! is just one of many new and returning live-entertainment experiences guests can enjoy during the Walt Disney World 50th Anniversary celebration.

"Fantasmic! is a show that will take you on a journey to see so many characters, so many villains and heroes," explained Melanie Gagne, entertainment proprietor for Disney's Hollywood Studios. "It's one of our biggest shows, and many guests will plan their day or their entire vacation around Fantasmic!" The return of Fantasmic! includes the debut of an all-new sequence that will bring to life heroic moments from Disney stories such as *Moana*, *Mulan*, *Aladdin*, *Pocahontas*, and *Frozen 2*.

"In bringing Fantasmic! back, we have a brand-new scene that we're calling our Disney Heroes scene," continued Matthew Hamel, show director for Disney Live Entertainment. "We get to see some new characters introduced to Fantasmic! and we get to show their stories in a new, unique way utilising a combination of projections, lasers and new lighting." Across the years, Disney has continued to be a leading force in the world of theme parks and attractions, with many of its venues coming under the most visited in the world. What began as a side project for Walt Disney has arguably become something that the company is most renowned for, alongside its incredible animation career spanning both TV and film.

Although the parks themselves are not celebrating 100 years this year, the legacy of Disney lives on through each complex, and Walt's vision of a place "where the parents and the children could have fun together" has been truly and undeniably met.



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# IAAPA EXPO ORLANDO BACK WITH A BANG

IAAPA Expo concluded in November with 36,882 registered attendees, including 25,561 buyers representing 11,689 buying companies, and 1,077 exhibiting companies, while attendees represented 104 different countries.

IAAPA Expo concluded in November with 36,882 registered attendees, including 25,561 buyers representing 11,689 buying companies, and 1,077 exhibiting companies, while attendees represented 104 different countries.

"We set out this year to bring a fresh and innovative Expo experience to showcase the best of the attractions industry and we certainly accomplished that," said Michael Shelton, executive director, and vice president for IAAPA North America. "We proudly welcomed more than 36,000 attendees, filled more than 518,000sqft of exhibit space and presented more than 100 on-site educational sessions. The incredible speakers and content presented along with the largest trade show in the industry surely inspired all who attended."

IAAPA kicked with a programme full of educational opportunities and highlights including EDUTours at Busch Gardens Tampa Bay and Walt Disney World's Blizzard Beach. The weeklong conference and trade show also included seven EDUTours, more than 50

networking opportunities, and a variety of charity events benefiting Give Kids The World.

In total, participating Expo attendees raised more than \$157,000 through the 19th Annual IAAPA International Charity Golf Tournament; 12th Annual IAAPA Charity Motorcycle Run benefiting Give Kids the World; and the 16th Annual IAAPA Footprints From the Heart 5K Run/1-Mile Walk Benefiting Give Kids The World Village.

"It has been wonderful to see the continued recovery of the global attractions industry," said Hal McEvoy, IAAPA's former president and chief executive officer. "I'm proud of our team, partners, and volunteers for executing a great show in Orlando that benefits our members and our community."

Attendees were also able to enjoy the thrills of one of Orlando's top theme parks with the signature IAAPA Celebrates event held this year at Universal's Islands of Adventures theme park.

# 2022 Exhibitor Highlights

As well as this, a special mention goes to InterPark columnist Dennis Spiegel, who was inducted into the IAAPA Hall of Fame during the Gala Awards Ceremony. Spiegel started his career path in the amusement and leisure industry at just 13-years-old when he became a ticket taker at Coney Island Amusement Park in Cincinnati. Since then, his thirst for the industry knew no boundaries and has gone on to be a prevalent figure from designing, consulting and overseeing over 500 projects crossing through 55 countries. His long list of achievements includes opening Kings Island, founding the International Theme Park Services and IAAPA Chairman of the Board. His longevity of working 60 years speaks volumes of a person enamoured and enthused to work on behalf of the theme park industry. "Mr Spiegel has long been recognised as the 'go to' guy when an opinion or the most updated information is being sought," said IAAPA on behalf of his honour. Plans for IAAPA Expo 2023 are underway already, with the show scheduled to take place in Orlando 13-17 November.

**HOLOVIS** told InterPark the team was excited to attend the IAAPA Expo again this year during which, it made two exciting announcements: its partnership with Farbound and the upcoming DarKoaster attraction at Busch Gardens Williamsburg.

Tim Rheault and Steve Trowbridge, former heads of Rhetroactive, have joined Holovis, expanding the firm's creative and design management capabilities for delivering innovative experiential experiences. The new partnership plans to debut several ready-to-market attractions under the new innovative Farbound brand in the coming year. Holovis Farbound creates experiences that can simultaneously live in real life and the digital world, so users can interact and engage with stories and characters wherever and whenever they wish. Farbound builds on and integrates with the Holovis HoloTrac software platform, enabling virtual, augmented, and physical realities to converge, allowing guests to journey through a different adventure. Holovis Farbound will partner with studios, brand IP holders, and venue developers to design, deploy and operate the next generation of ground-breaking immersive extended experiences.

DarKoaster – is North America's first all-indoor straddle coaster, launching in 2023 at Busch Gardens Williamsburg. Travelling on snowmobiles across 2,454ft of track, explorers race through darkness while changing course to avoid the elements. As the weather strikes, riders encounter four accelerating launches on this family-friendly dark ride experience. Holovis said the team is excited to be working on this

project and cannot wait for guests to experience it this year!

Commenting on the show generally, Holovis told InterPark that overall, it went great and it was wonderful seeing the show floor come back to life in 2022.

**AQUATIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP (ADG)** had a very successful IAAPA 2022, sharing some of its award-winning projects with visitors - Wild Rivers (Irvine, CA) and Wild Waters (Cullman, AL) - while hosting an epic happy hour at its booth, where the team saw many familiar and new faces. The company's award-winning surf wave technology, EpicSurf, drew lots of interest to the booth and IAAPA 2022 enabled the team to meet potential buyers and to talk to many great people within the industry.

**INNOVATIVE LEISURE'S** Phil Pickersgill told InterPark: "IAAPA Orlando was a big week for us as we were sponsors of the Monday night BALPPA (The British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and Attractions) drinks reception which was very well attended. On the show floor we were represented through our three US manufacturers: RCI Adventure, Spectrum Sports and Water Wars. The show was very much alive and busy this year, however due to the success of IAAPA London in September we felt that UK and EU visitors were arguably lower than usual. In addition there was a lot of excitement and mention of the charity 5K run this time with many records broken."

**VEKOMA** announced Circuit Breaker is making its debut at Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas, US, making it the first Tilt Coaster in the States. As the riders slowly climb, a massive seesaw looms in the distance. They stop at a dead-end track, floating in mid-air. The huge track tilts. Riders in the front tip down. Riders in the back lift to 40-meters (131ft) high before falling into a pit of camelbacks, full-speed Zero-G roll airtime, inversions and bunny hops.



Jinma Rides





GCI



ADG TEAM



Ruud Koppens from ETF



ZAMPERLA



WhiteWater Press Conference IAAPA Expo 2022



Sacoa Team

**INTAMIN** and SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment announced a partnership of three new rides for 2023. Among these rides are the DarKoaster at Busch Gardens Williamsburg, and a Flume Coaster at SeaWorld San Antonio. The companies also unveiled a ride car for the soon-to-be announced coaster at SeaWorld San Diego.

Furthermore, Intamin presented another new immersive ride system – the Dynamic Motion Stage, which offers a new level of immersive storytelling with a highly dynamic and unique ride system.

**POLIN WATERPARKS** announced it has entered an exclusive distribution agreement with Ka'ana Wave Co – creator of the award-winning CM7-Series of surf attractions. Polin will work to extend Ka'ana's reach in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. "This agreement positions Ka'ana extremely well in two major growth territories and is a key milestone in our distribution strategy," said Stacy Shannon, Ka'ana Wave Co. VP, Strategic Accounts & Alliances.

**GREAT COASTERS INTERNATIONAL** launched the Infinity Flyer trains, which will be on the new Zambezi Zinger coaster at Worlds of Fun in Kansas City, Missouri. The manufacturer also showcased its Titan Track, which is its newest product and will be built into the spiral lift hill on the Zambezi Zinger coaster, which gives riders an extra smooth ride circling up the lift hill.

**THEMICS PHILIPPINES** presented itself for the first time on the American exhibition floor after a two-year, Covid-related break. Being a theming manufacturer specialising in themed environments and IP-figures, Themics naturally decided to have a themed booth - this year to resemble the Ancient Greece. The Expo was overall a great success, generating a lot of interest and project inquiries for the company. The positive experience also led to their decision to add IAAPA Expo Asia to their agenda next year.

**SALLY DARK RIDES** shared details about the new Whispering Pines Haunted Hotel it is creating exclusively for Funtown Splashtown in Maine, US - where guests will quickly learn the haunted hotel is really the park's dark ride attraction.

"We are really excited to work with Funtown Splashtown," shared John Wood, Chairman and CEO of Sally Dark Rides. "Blending a magical, spooky theme with our company's interactive technology and unmatched theming allows us to deliver a one-of-a-kind experience."

**INTERLINK** had a very successful IAAPA Expo this year, with Commercial Director John Davies commenting: "The show had much more of its traditional "buzz" this year with many more international visitors returning now that we are clear

of the pandemic. Last year's show was very much a domestic show due to travel restrictions."

During the show Interlink released details of its latest dark ride in Nha Trang, Vietnam, which has been themed by Jora Vision to produce an exciting guest experience. It also hinted at an innovative new ride to be installed in the Middle East during 2023, which will debut some exciting new features and become the first ride of its kind in that region. In addition to this, Interlink teased visitors to the booth with insights of its new water coaster, which is already attracting great interest in the market.

**TRIOTECH** was proud to announce that Hive Break, its double walkthrough experience has been recognised by the IAAPA Brass Ring Awards. The attraction, recently installed at OCT Fabland Valley Resort in China, was rewarded for "Best New Product Major Ride/Attraction second place" in the \$2 to \$5 million category.

"We're honoured to have been recognised by the Brass Ring Awards", stated Ernest Yale, CEO & Founder of Triotech. "It is always humbling and motivating to receive recognition from our industry. This drives us to continue developing breakthrough attractions."

**HUSS PARK ATTRACTIONS** presented four new attraction concepts following the successful launch of Break Dance 5 during last year's IAAPA Expo Europe. All five new rides will be available to customers over the coming year. The first Break Dance 5 is already in production and the company is working on multiple projects around the world. Furthermore, Huss is working on a mobile version for travelling attractions.

**SIMWORX** launched its new flying theatre solution, the Pegasus Flying Theatre. The dynamic and scalable ride considers venues of all capacities as it endeavours to be a solution to fit all without compromising on experience.

**ZAMPERLA** revealed the Lightning Train - to be installed on the Lightning LSM Coaster at the PNE, which will be Canada's fastest launch coaster. "This Lightning train, and the Lightning LSM coaster project in Playland at the PNE, is confirmation that the investments made in people and technologies over the past five years in our Roller Coaster Business Unit are bearing fruit," said Zamperla.

**WHITEWATER** introduced six new products: Blasterango Battle; Boomerango Squeeze; Walhalla; AquaFortress; FlowSurf – Deep River; and Clarus - Truly Clear Fiberglass; as well as discussing how parks can take advantage of the concept of the Joy Economy, and showcased iconic projects that were completed this year or are in progress to make world-class destinations.





Themics Booth



S&S



Chris Snyder and Danielle Koroschetz from Zebec



Clair Hain from Great Coasters International



Lars Lenders and Jaime Maw at the S&S booth





Ray Lauenstein, Shannon Service and Julie St.Louis from Aquatic Development Group



RDC



Robert Fankhaenel, Leif Arne Petersen and Ferdinand Eppensteiner from Hologate



IAAPA 2022





Innovative Leisure



The Vekoma team



The Mack Rides team



Troy and Kiana Schnelle from Art Attack



Sally Dark Rides



## **JAKOB WAHL** **IAAPA President & CEO**

InterPark Editor Beth Whitaker caught up with IAAPA's new President & CEO Jakob Wahl following his appointment to the position in November 2022; Wahl succeeds Hal McEvoy who will retire in April.





Jakob & Andreas Andersen at the Valkyria opening

#### **HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING IN THE PARKS AND ATTRACTIONS INDUSTRY FOR?**

I had my first summer job in the amusements industry when I was 16 years old; I checked tickets at the entrance of Phantasialand in Germany - a beautiful theme park. After that, it feels like I've never left. I was attracted to this industry from the very beginning and never wanted to work anywhere else. That first summer job was the beginning of a wonderful career in the industry for me.

#### **HOW HAS YOUR CAREER UNFOLDED OVER THE YEARS?**

After my summer job I continued with my education and then I made a small detour doing something completely different, before being hired in 2009 by Andreas Anderson and Karen Staley. Back then, they were Executive Directors of IAAPA Europe, and I started with them as a Program Manager. It was a very small team, very entrepreneurial, we all did a little bit of everything. It was a fun road and I stayed there for around five years before moving to Europa-Park in Germany, the second largest amusement park in Europe after Disneyland Paris. There I worked with the owner family and eventually became Director of Communications before moving back to IAAPA. It always felt like I had two hearts in my chest, so I went back to the association and became Vice President and Executive Director of IAAPA EMEA, then COO last year, and now, obviously, I'm moving into the CEO role, which is an amazing honour.

#### **WHAT IS IT YOU LOVE ABOUT THIS INDUSTRY?**

It's two things. The first is the people - whenever you meet anyone in the industry, you really get a sense

of how social we all are, to the point where even so-called competitors are willing to help each other to leverage the industry. I think that is something you don't find in many other sectors. It is wonderful to see this positive attitude across the globe. The second thing is, and it might sound a bit cliché, we bring joy to people. We work to make people have a better time and the fact that we as an association can help our members promote their business to become better, is a beautiful purpose of IAAPA and we should all be proud to work in this industry.

#### **WHAT CHANGES HAVE YOU SEEN IN THE INDUSTRY OVER THE YEARS?**

When the Tivoli in Denmark opened, the founder was asked when it would be finished, because it was obviously not ready on time. He responded with, "Tivoli will never be finished." That's very representative of our industry - we're always changing and innovating. The biggest trend I've seen over the last 15 to 20 years is the use of intellectual property. Think about how many parks work with known brands and licenses. I'm not only talking about the Disneys and Universals of the world. Other examples are Peppa Pig, I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!, and more. Aside from IP, we're always seeing changes in technology and how that affects park operations and the development of projects or offerings around the world.

#### **AND HOW HAS THE VISITOR PROFILE CHANGED?**

I think we have a globalised world today and while 30 or 40 years ago our catchment area was very regional, things have changed. With the prevalence of social media, the world has become local and it's fuelling people to travel more and experience things for themselves instead of just seeing pictures

online. There's a fear of missing out, meaning we must step up our game in when it comes to offering experiences that guests can't have anywhere else. This is where themed experiences and themed accommodations come into play. You want to offer them something they can talk about and but can also share on social media.

#### **WHAT CHALLENGES IS THE INDUSTRY FACING CURRENTLY?**

If there's one overarching theme in our industry right now, it's related to staffing and supply chain issues. It's such a wonderful industry to work in and we are all in love with what we do, so it's a pity that currently we aren't managing to show younger people what a great career they can have in this business.

#### **WHAT FEEDBACK ARE YOU GETTING ABOUT WHY PARKS ARE HAVING STAFFING ISSUES?**

I think it has intensified over the past few years. It's not only an amusements and attractions industry issue, but something affecting the entire hospitality industry. Today's younger workforce has a different perspective. There's a stronger desire to work hours that allow for better flexibility at home. To combat that, several great companies are stepping up their benefits package for employees. For example, Herschend is offering free education for their staff members. This is obviously costly, but they are convinced that this is showing their people how much they're valued.

IAAPA is also pushing to turn things around globally. We're talking to several universities in Europe that are introducing a master's programme for students in effort to educate young people and make them realise it's a good industry to work in.

#### **WHAT ABOUT THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS IN SOME PARTS OF THE WORLD; HOW WILL THIS AFFECT THINGS?**

I sometimes refer to the saying, "the price will be forgotten if the quality remains," and I think that is the key factor to success. If we are relevant and can provide good family fun, we will get through difficult times. Yes, there is an energy crisis in many countries across Europe, which ultimately hits the bottom line of many of our operators, but we are hopeful that people still see the value of attractions. If you think back to 2009 when there was a huge global economic crisis, most of the regional parks didn't suffer as much because people stayed at home and visited those regional attractions to ultimately have a good day out.

#### **HOW IS IAAPA CONTINUING TO SUPPORT ITS MEMBERS DURING THESE TRICKY TIMES?**

The world is ever changing, and the speed of change



Jakob at the IAAPA Expo Europe 2019 in Paris

accelerates also within IAAPA. I see this association as one that should assist its members on this journey of recovery and it should be independent of where the members sit, or the size, or type of organisation. We should speak for the overall attractions industry and to try to help people entertain their guests.

This is where, coming out of Covid, there are many different areas that we still need to focus on. I'm super happy that we have stepped up investments into economic impact studies all over the world and are about to launch our new benchmark report, where we try to show our members what is going on and what is relevant and how we can help them in their daily business. I also have some great regional Vice Presidents in Asia, Latin America, Europe, and North America who spot when there are issues or trends. They have the freedom to react and come up with white papers helping our members more directly. The Water Park Week from the Latin America Caribbean Office or an accessibility white paper are some of these items.

#### **WHAT ARE IAAPA'S KEY VALUES?**

IAAPA offers a global umbrella where we bring people together from all over the world, but at the same time offer regional services. We have the benefit of worldwide teams who know what's going on in the regions. A great example is our Covid guidance document. Quite early on when Covid hit in the first quarter of 2020, we brought together the leading operators from across the world to discuss how we moved forward; how we guaranteed safe fun in our parks. We created that document together and shared it with our other members who might not have had the same resources. I think that ultimately illustrates the idea of an association where we benefit from the knowledge that is sitting within it and we share it out. Bringing people in touch with each other... I'm totally convinced of its benefits.

#### **ALMOST CREATING A FAMILY WITHIN A FAMILY-FOCUSED INDUSTRY?**

Yes definitely, it's like when you come to one of our





Jakob during his time at Europa-Park working as a scare actor at the Traumatica Halloween event

trade shows, it feels like a friendly reunion. I think that makes it very special and makes it easier for us to service this industry because everyone is willing to share.

#### **WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF YOUR CAREER HIGHLIGHTS SO FAR?**

Obviously being nominated as CEO is the highlight of my career. But there were other things, I'm very proud of: working at Europa Park and being involved in opening a flying theatre was fantastic on the operator side... On IAAPA side I'm very happy with my active involvement in bringing events to all areas of the world. I'm proud that I was involved in bringing the first-ever event to Africa in 2020 and expanding massively into the Middle East, a region where we now have a lot of members and the profile of IAAPA has grown.

IAAPA used to be perceived as a very American association in Europe until the early 2000s. Together with Andreas and Karen, we have really tried to show we understand the various markets and that charted the profile of IAAPA as international and truly global association leading the way for other regional offices such as Mexico, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and then ultimately the North American office.



Jakob & Franceen Gonzales riding Wodan at Europa-Park

#### **WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO IN YOUR NEW ROLE?**

It's such a pleasure to be able to help members. I think it is our job to see the trends and the best practices across the world and question whether it could be something of relevance for others and then share those messages through education, communication, trade shows, and to really try and elevate our industry. That is something I'm very excited and honoured to be able to do. I love this industry and I love the association. I think it's been beneficial for me to have worked as an operator - to have been on that side and understand the daily operations of our members - it also helps for a global association that I have worked and lived on four different continents.

#### **WHAT WAS YOUR IMPRESSION OF THE MOST RECENT EXPOS IN ORLANDO AND LONDON?**

I think both events were successful. We saw many innovations on the show floor, the education and networking sessions were full, and there was a general positive vibe: I've never seen so many satisfied exhibitors and I think that is a great sign for optimism in our industry.

Highlights included the Thursday night event IAAPA Celebrates in Orlando at Islands of Adventure, where Universal hosted us in an incomparable way.

We also introduced the first global sustainability summit at the Expo in Orlando. This subject is close to my heart, so I was particularly happy about this.

#### **IS THERE ANYTHING MORE WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR WORK AT IAAPA?**

IAAPA wouldn't be where it is without our members and volunteers. They make the difference in helping us establish the regional offices, shows, and events. This is a member-driven association and the collaboration between committees and the team is the foundation for our success in responding to member needs across the world.





# Legoland Pirate River Quest Legoland Florida Resort, USA

By David Whitworth









**At Legoland Florida Resort it was a case of “shiver me timbers” as a new Pirate-themed attraction navigated its way to the park for its opening on 12 January at the turn of the new year. Legoland Pirate River Quest promises a hearty adventure for its intrepid travellers to “set sail through uncharted waters.”**

The pirate attraction was originally scheduled to open last November but suffered a delay due to the damaging water effects of Hurricane Ian. The new attraction lives up to the tagline of the visitor attraction’s focus on children that “Legoland Florida Resort is the place where kids rule!”

The pirates’ boats take a voyage through the lush green forests of the park where guests will see various pirate-themed Lego characters and scenes such as a pirate duelling with a monkey and crossing swords as they battle on a multi-coloured beam overhanging the river. Appearances by parrots and a pink flamingo heighten the theming further, reinforcing that you are amid a pirate paradise. A family-friendly treasure hunt adventure awaits the daring pirate in you.

Guests will travel in style on board red rustic boats, which have four rows sitting three guests to a row and is navigated by a Legoland team member. Emblazoned on the boats are a statue of a parrot as well as a white skull and cross bone - a must for any pirate ride.

As well as the debut of Pirate River Quest, Legoland Florida Resort commenced the Pirate Fest Weekends in which, for five consecutive weekends, families can enjoy pirate-packed days of play, including exclusive character meet-and-greets, entertainment, Lego

builds, and specialty food - all of which is included with a theme park admission or with a Legoland Florida Resort annual pass.

Nick Miller, Director of Operations & Guest Excellence from Legoland Florida Resort, provided InterPark with further treasures about the Pirate River Quest.

#### **CAN YOU GIVE US A FLAVOUR OF THE NEW RIDE?**

“Ahoy adventure and set sail aboard the all-new Pirate River Quest! Journey through the natural passageways of Lake Eloise and travel along the uncharted waters of the historic Cypress Gardens on a captain-driven boat in search of Captain Redbeard’s lost treasure. This family-friendly ride will unfold brick by brick with a variety of exciting sequences that tell the tale of a rowdy Lego pirate crew, a troop of mischievous monkeys and even a fearsome kraken.”

#### **HOW LONG DID THE RIDE TAKE TO BUILD FROM START TO FINISH?**

“The ride has been under construction since January of 2021. That said, this attraction is a culmination of years of refurbishment of the traditional Cypress Gardens canal waterway, which has been an ongoing project since 2019.”

#### **WHAT CHALLENGES DID PIRATE RIVER QUEST POSE IN CONSTRUCTING?**

“Working with a canal system that is nearly 90 years old created interesting challenges. Additionally, the ride takes place on a free-floating boat, which meant developing new standard operating procedures [SOPs] and training captains that can manoeuvre our boats for an enjoyable experience. Finally, Hurricane



Ian posed its own challenge as it did cause some damage to the Gardens that needed to be repaired before we could open the ride."

#### **HOW LONG IS THE RIDE JOURNEY?**

"The ride is 22-minutes long."

#### **WHAT PREVIOUS ATTRACTIONS WERE IN PLACE WHERE PIRATE RIVER QUESTS SITS NOW?**

"We are using some historic infrastructure from Cypress Gardens, along with new construction. The docks were constructed next to an old picnic section of the park."

#### **COMPLETE THE PHRASE: 'A RIDE ON PIRATE RIVER QUEST...'**

"A ride on Pirate River Quest is a relaxing journey to learn the tale of Captain Redbeard, the Pirate. The ride takes you on an adventure through the historic Cypress Gardens and is filled with surprises that will interest guests both young and old."

Legoland Florida Resort, which is run by Merlin Entertainment, opened its doors to the public on 15 October 2011. It is located 45-minutes from Orlando and Tampa and accommodates a sprawling 145-acre theme park. Its huge size makes the resort the second largest Legoland park after Legoland Windsor in the UK.

Legoland Florida Resort has more than 50 rides at its park for guests to enjoy. It also provides a splashing fun experience with 14 water slides in the water park, which is open all-year-round. Guests can also stay for longer and get their fill of the new Pirate River Quest attraction as Legoland Florida Resort accommodates three unique themed Hotels.







# NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET

By: Dennis Spiegel

Happy New Year everyone, and I hope it is a happy new year, particularly after the last three years we have experienced in our industry. We see quite often in the news media, particularly the economic markets, a reference to “roller coaster rides”, or ups and downs in the economy, the stock market, the bond markets, housing markets, labour markets... Just about every market you can think of. Well, while roller coaster rides are one of our premium offerings, we would like to see 2023 have less ups and downs than we have experienced recently.

Reading the tea leaves; looking at the crystal ball; it appears that there are six issues that we as an industry will continue to deal with in 2023.

**#1 Pricing** - As we all know, pricing is a complex issue... A science, if you will, that requires intense scrutinisation of a lot of factors. As a result of the economic issues that we have incurred, particularly in Q3 and Q4 of 2022, the pricing conundrum is going to have to be carefully scrutinised. The best example to review is Disney's pricing, which has come under intense public comments, having raised the prices multiple times in 2022. It appears that it may even be considering lowering some of the existing prices for 2023, as a result of the public backlash. So, pricing is a factor.

**#2 Inflation and ongoing economic issues** - At the time of this writing, the United States and countries around the globe continue to experience high inflation and, at this point, we see no reduction on the horizon. It will come as various steps are undertaken to arrest inflation, but it does not appear to be happening quick enough as we are already into our planning cycles and need better guidance for

pricing and other internal operating issues that need to be currently forecast.

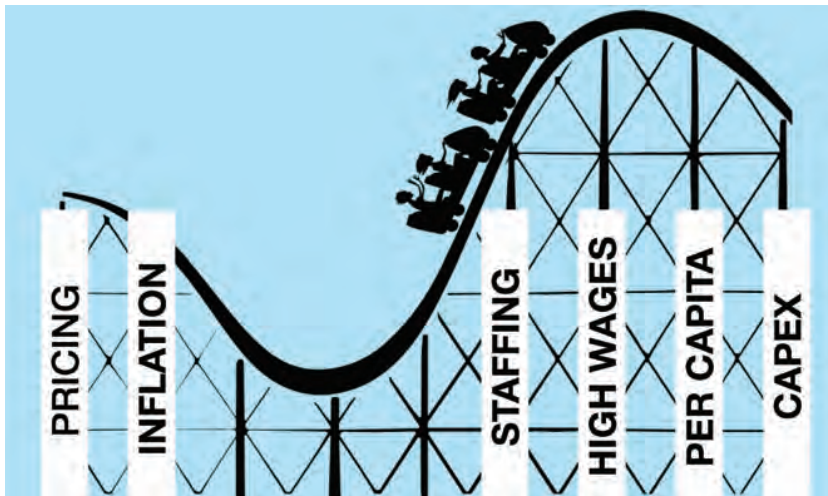
**#3 Staffing shortages** - Here in the United States, during December 2022, 200,000 jobs were added, with the unemployment rate staying near a 50-year low rate of 3.7%. Even with this low jobless rate, the lack of employees in the hospitality sector continues to be significantly high. Restaurants, hotels, and leisure attractions all continue to see shortages that need to be filled.

This comes at a time when another issue affecting us...

**#4 High wages** - Have had enormous impact on our industry P&L statements. Even though there is low unemployment, many people have left our industry to become their own bosses (i.e. Uber, Lyft, DoorDash, GrubHub, Just Eat, Deliveroo and so on). They create their own working schedules - days on, days off, holidays, non-holidays, weekdays, weekends. They have flexibility that they never had working at a full-time job for someone else. It appears that this sub-culture of employment we have created is not going to go away. We at ITPS believe it will have an impact that continues forward, thus creating a young-person shortfall in our labour markets. We have seen during the last two years, operators have added incentive measures to attract and keep employees - bonuses, scholarships, giveaways, anything attractive to hold employees. These, plus other measures to attract and hold employees in the future will become more important and commonplace.

**#5 Maintaining and increasing per capita spending** - One of the few positive impacts Covid had on our





industry was that it forced us to accelerate and expand our touchless, cashless spending systems at destination and regional parks. This put us very much in line with people buying online at Amazon and eBay, for example. It seems that once you are in an online buying situation, the propensity to continue to shop and spend a little more occurs. The same thing happened in parks and attractions. While people were buying through touchless programs, they bought an additional item or two, thus increasing capital spend. That was good. However, we did see a softening in per capita spend begin to occur during Q3 2022, when inflation and other economic impacts began taking hold. Per caps were still up, but they did begin to sink from their highest points in Q1 2022. So, operators must look at how to maintain these increases we enjoyed over the last two seasons.

**#6 Proper capex spend** - Proper capex spend is necessary to drive annual attendance. It is incumbent upon each operating organization to determine the necessary and proper amounts of capex to spend against their various attendance demographics. Operating entities live on repeat visitation, and repeat visitation is driven by capex (new product). Therefore, it is important to continue to commune with the manufacturers and suppliers of attractions to ensure that you are properly in the procurement queue to meet your anticipated attendance growth.

These factors, along with others, will be important to carefully manage over the next several years. When looking at these factors, it is interesting to see that they touch basically every operating aspect of our operations... Marketing, finance, operations, safety, maintenance, merchandise, and food and beverage. A cohesive approach by management teams will be necessary to get us out of the woods.

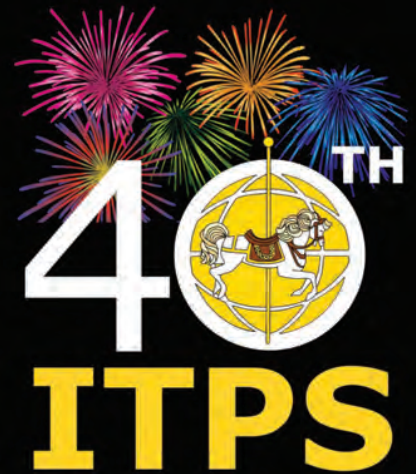
Images: Source ITPS

#### About ITPS

**ITPS "WHERE FUN IS A SERIOUS BUSINESS,"** is globally the leisure industry's leading independent, full-service consulting firm. Founded by Dennis Spiegel in 1983 and located in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, ITPS is uniquely qualified to assist in all aspects of leisure project development and has worked on over 500 projects and in over 55 countries since its inception. Always on the forefront of new trends, ITPS is experienced to assist in all aspects of any new project or existing facility. They can be reached at [itps@interthemepark.com](mailto:itps@interthemepark.com). ITPS is celebrating 40 years of service to the amusement industry in 2023.



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Cincinnati, Ohio 45206  
USA**



# CALENDAR

## March 14 - 16

**DEAL 2023**, Dubai World Trade Centre, Dubai, UAE  
 Contact: International Expo-Consults (IEC)  
 Tel: +971 4 3435777  
 Email: deal@iecdubai.com  
 www.dealmiddleeastshow.com

## May 28 - 30

**Saudi Entertainment & Amusement Expo**, Riyadh International Convention & Exhibition Centre, Riyadh, SAUDI ARABIA  
 Contact: DMG Events  
 Tel: +96612 6970287  
 Email: marketing@saudientertainmentandamusement.com  
 www.saudientertainmentexpo.com

## June 14 - 16

**IAAPA Expo Asia 2023**, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Marina Bay, Sands, SINGAPORE  
 Contact: International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions, 4155 West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando, Florida, USA  
 Tel: +1 321 319 7600  
 Fax: +1 321 319 7690  
 Email: iaapa@IAAPA.org  
 www.iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-asia

## June 28 - 30

**10th Events & Amusement Expo Tokyo**, Tokyo Big Sight, Tokyo, JAPAN  
 Contact: Rx Japan Ltd.  
 Tel: +813 3349 8510  
 Email: live-expo.eng.jp@rxglobal.com  
 https://www.event-week.jp/en-gb.html

## July 12 - 14

**CAE Beijing 2023**, China International Exhibition Centre, Shunyi New Venue, Beijing, CHINA  
 Contact: Katie Wang, L&A International Ltd, 6 Penmere Grove, Sale, Cheshire, M33 4FP, UK  
 Tel: +44 (0)161 6100022  
 Email: katie.w@chinaattractionsexpo.org  
 www.chinaattractionsexpo.org

## July 21 - 23

**Philippine Attraction & Amusement Expo 2023**, World Trade Centre Metro Manila, PHILIPPINES  
 Contact: HQ Bizlink International Pte Ltd,  
 Email: mail@hqbizlinkintl.com  
 www.pa-expo.net

## August 23 - 24

**Theme Park - Water Park Expo Vietnam 2023**, Tan Son Nhat Pavilion Convention Center, Ho Chi Minh City, VIETNAM  
 Contact: Fireworks Trade Media Co., Ltd. 18th floor, Indochina Park Tower 4, Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Da Kao Ward, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, VIETNAM  
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 www.themeparkvietnam.com

## September 26 - 28

**IAAPA Expo Europe**, Messe Wien, Vienna, AUSTRIA  
 Contact: International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions, 4155 West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando, Florida, USA  
 Tel: +1 321 319 7600  
 Fax: +1 321 319 7690  
 Email: iaapa@IAAPA.org  
 www.iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-europe

## November 14 - 17

**IAAPA Expo Orlando**, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Florida, USA  
 Contact: International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions, 4155 West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando, Florida, USA  
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